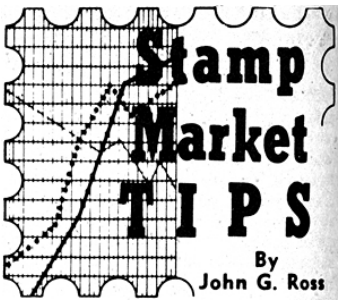
Stamp Market Tips:
STAMPS Magazine, May 5, 1979

By John G. Ross, with updates by John F. Dunn



In bringing back the old "Stamp Market Tips" feature, there are some qualifications we need to keep in mind. First the past is not necessarily a predictor of the future. Also, we need to factor in inflation. For example, in comparing prices Scott or other prices quoted by Ross, the U.S. $ inflation factor from 1979 to 2012 is 3.16, so a stamp valued at $1 in 1979 would have to be valued at $3.16 today in order to have just kept up with inflation.

There also is the matter of Scott's own valuation policy changes. Examples are the change from FVF to VF as a standard, the expansion of NH prices as well as separate NH prices, and the controversial reduction of almost all Scott prices in the 1980s (to bring them closer to reality). Essentially, the purpose of these "Stamp Market Tips Revisited" is not to come up with a precise comparison, but to suggest stamp tips you may want to revisit, so for my purposes here I am going to ignore these variables, but I point them out so that you can factor them in if you choose to do so.

Working from the May 5, 1979 column, only one of the TIPS has increased in value, while the other three declined. One of these showed a very small decline, which is an above average performance relative to other TIPS we have studied to date.

On the pages that follow, in ascending order of performance, are the four TIPS from the May 5, 1979 column. JFD.

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GREECE — Some of the more recent issues of Greece are rising in price. Most of these issued in the 1960s were sold to this country in fairly large quantities and still can be had fairly easily. It is my belief that you should start looking for some of these sets, as in my opinion most earlier issues of Greece have gone up in price to such high figures that most collectors in Greece have decided to make sure that they own all later issues. Thus recently I have noticed an increase in buy ads for all these issues. I suggest you get a hold of the set of eleven stamps issued in August 1960 to commemorate the 17th Olympic Games, being held in Rome (Scott number 677-687, shown, Sc. 677). A total of 223,458 complete sets were issued. As I mentioned before, large quantities of that set were sold to this country, therefore it still can be found fairly easily at an attractive price.

Scott 1979 lists the set for $24.50, up $1.50 from last years Catalog price. Dealers in Greece are willing to pay about $14 at this time, which is $4 more than they were willing to pay just a few months ago. Make sure you get a hold of that series soon, it might go quite a bit higher in price in a short time.

Greece Sc. 677-687: 1979 SCV $24.50;
2012 Dollars $77.42; 2013 SCV $24.05;
Percent Decrease: 69%; Per Annum Rate -2%

GREAT BRITAIN — Looking over the world wide stamp market, I feel that most prices for stamps of Great Britain will keep on going higher. Anything you buy at today's prices will be considered a bargain in the future. I believe you will do well looking for sets that still can be had at an affordable price.

I believe the set of fourteen stamps issued for regular postal use with the portrait of King George VI, issued in 1937-1939 is still a good buy at today's prices (Scott number 235-248, shown, Sc. 248). At the time of issue, World War II broke out and some colors were changed due to a shortage of certain dyes. I doubt that many dealers anywhere laid aside a large quantity of that issue. For a long time, demand for all issues with the portrait of Queen Elizabeth II was greater in England than for all issues during her father's reign. Besides, I believe you still can buy this set over here from your dealer occasionally. Do not wait until you find a complete set, most of these stamps were issued at different times, thus many dealers might have some odds and ends in stock. Scott 1979 lists the complete set for $30.30, up $11.50 from the 1978 edition. Dealers in England are willing to pay a little less than $35 per set and their asking price is up to $50.

Great Britain Sc. 235-248: 1979 SCV $30.30;
2012 Dollars $95.75; 2013 SCV $47.00;
Percent Decrease: 51%; Per Annum Rate -1.5%

[Note: Great Britain prices were particularly hard hit when Scott reduced its prices in the late 1980s in order to bring Scott values closer to actual market rates. JFD.]

NORWAY - Stamps of Norway are in great demand all over Europe, especially in the Scandinavian countries. Demand for many issues keeps the dealer's shelves bare of any good issues. One stamp that you should not miss picking up, is the one Kroner issued in September 1941 to commemorate the Centenary of the corner stone laying of the University of Oslo (Scott number 246). Printing of that stamp was 100,000 copies. It was issued while Norway was under German occupation, thus many German collectors collect this stamp as part of their occupation stamp collection.

Scott 1979 raised the price to $30 from last year's quote of $25. German Michel Catalog lists that stamp for over $70. Thus the retail price in Europe for that stamp is much higher than your Scott Catalog might indicate. Dealers in Europe are gladly paying over $30 for that stamp. If you have a chance to buy this stamp over here from your dealer at a reasonable price, do not hesitate for a moment, buy it. I am certain it will rise quite a bit further in time to come.

Norway Sc. 246: 1979 SCV $30;
2012 Dollars $94.80; 2013 SCV $75;
Percent Decrease: 21%; Per Annum Rate -.06%

PORTUGAL — Stamps of Portugal are quite in demand in Europe lately, especially since the political upheaval in that country has quieted down a great deal. Stamps of Portugal never were plentiful in this country, but here and there you might be able to pick up a good set at a reasonable price.

I suggest you start looking for the set of sixteen stamps issued in 1953-1956, Scott number 761-775, shown, Sc. 775. This set shows the seal of King Diniz and was intended for regular postal use. Thus it was available at every Post Office in Portugal for a few years and most of these stamps have been used up for postage. To find this set complete is not too easy but if you do, pick it up, it surely is worth your while to add it to your collection. Scott 1979 lists the set for $16.93, just up 80¢ from Scott's 1978 edition. Dealers in Europe are willing to pay as much as $20 as that set sells for just about $30 at retail.

Portugal Sc. 761-775: 1979 SCV $16.93;
2012 Dollars $53.50; 2013 SCV $102.05;
Percent Increase: 48.5%; Per Annum Rate +1.5%

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